

**City of Renton Customer Information Bulletin**  
**Can I Build a Shed or Garage in  
My Backyard?**

(Single Family Residential Zones)

**City of Renton Development Services Division**  
1055 South Grady Way-Renton, WA 98057  
Phone: 425-430-7200 Fax: 425-430-7231

**Do I Need a Permit to Build My Shed or Garage?**

Yes, you likely need a building permit for detached accessory structures such as garages, carports, playhouses, or sheds, even if the structure is prefabricated. There are exceptions for detached garden sheds or similar structures having a floor area<sup>1</sup> of 200 square feet or less, in which case a Building Permit is not required. These accessory structures must comply with other locational limitations (see below) and cannot be used for residential purposes such as living or sleeping.

**How Large Can My Shed or Garage Be? How Many Can I Have?**

Accessory structures are only permitted if there is currently a house located on the lot. The floor area of the accessory structure or (combined floor area if there are two structures) must be less than the floor area of the house. In addition, the lot coverage (total footprint of the house plus the accessory buildings) is limited by the zoning district.

The maximum size for a single accessory structure is 1,000 square feet. Up to two garages/sheds are permitted, provided that neither is over 720 square feet in size.

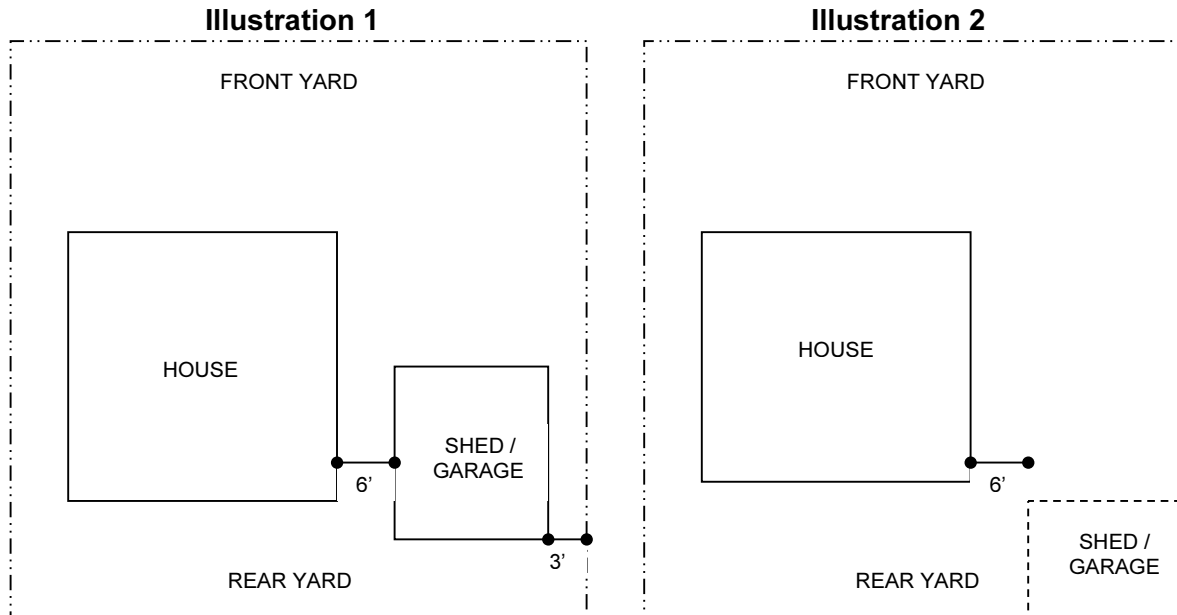
**How Tall Can My Shed or Garage Be?**

Non-Agricultural accessory structures may be no more than one (1) story nor may they be taller than 15 feet<sup>2</sup>. Agricultural structures (such as a chicken coop, barn, or greenhouse) are limited to two (2) stories and may be a maximum of 30 feet in height<sup>2</sup>. Agricultural structures are only allowed in zones where agricultural uses are permitted.

**Where on My Property Can I Put My Shed or Garage?**

To be considered a detached structure, your accessory structure must be located at least 6 feet away from your house or any other structure in the R-1, R-4 and R-8 zones. If the accessory structure is closer than 6 feet to the house or other structure, it will be considered an "attached structure" and will have to comply with the regulations<sup>3</sup> for attached structures. Your shed or garage may not be built within a front yard setback area, or side yard setback adjacent to a side street.

If you want to build your structure on the side of your house, it must be at least 6 feet away from your house and at least 3 feet away from your side yard property line. (See Illustration 1) If the location of your shed is between the back of your house and the rear property line, the shed or garage may be built right up to the property line, although the eaves of the structure may not extend over the property line. (See Illustration 2)



Garages, carports and parking areas must be set back from the rear property line a sufficient distance to provide a minimum of 24 feet of back-out room either on-site or on improved rights-of-way, where parking is accessed from the rear of the lot.

Locations of property lines are important; if you are uncertain about their locations it is recommended that you have a survey done by a licensed land surveyor.

### **What if I Want to Build a Structure for an Animal?**

Detached barns, stables, or other animal or agricultural related structures must be built at least 50 feet away from any side or rear property lines. Hobby kennels must follow requirements set by Renton Municipal Code 4-4-010 and 4-9-100.

### **How Do I Apply For a Building Permit?**

A building permit application may be obtained at Renton City Hall, 1055 South Grady Way, Renton, WA 98055, on the 6th floor in the Customer Service Center. For an accessory structure you will need the handout titled *Building Permit Requirements: Residential*. The submittal requirements for this type of Building Permit include 2 copies of a site plan and 2 copies of a construction plan (these are described on the building permit requirements handout). Fees will be based according to the value of the accessory structures. Staff can assist you in calculating the fee amount for the building permit. Please contact Development Services at (425) 430-7200 or visit the Customer Service Counter on the 6<sup>th</sup> floor of City Hall. The building permit will take approximately 2 weeks to be processed.

### **Is the Permit Application Available on the City's Website?**

Yes, Building Permit requirements and applications are also available online at [www.ci.renton.wa.us](http://www.ci.renton.wa.us). To access this information through the City of Renton's website, go to the above address and:

1. Click on the word "Download"
2. Scroll down to "Planning/Building/Public Works"
3. Click on "Building Permit Applications and Submittal Requirements"
4. Print out both the "Building Permit Requirements: Residential" instructions and the "Building Permit Application" form

### **Are There Any Other Permits That May be Required?**

If plumbing, mechanical, electrical or other utilities will be added to the accessory structure, additional permits will be required. Applications for these permits may be obtained on the 6<sup>th</sup> floor of Renton City Hall in the Customer Service Center, or online at [www.ci.renton.wa.us](http://www.ci.renton.wa.us), using the directions above.

### **Who Do I Contact if I Have Additional Questions?**

If you have further questions regarding zoning, setbacks or other land use related questions; please visit the 6<sup>th</sup> floor of City Hall, or call **(425) 430-7294** to be directed to a Planner.

If you have any structural, electrical, or plumbing questions, please visit City Hall or call **(425) 430-7276** to be directed to a Building Section representative.

For any utility questions, please visit City Hall or contact a Public Works representative at **(425) 430-7266**.

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#### Footnotes

1. Floor area is measured by the area included within the exterior walls of the structure.
2. See additional restrictions for individual zoning districts.